

FEDERALIST OR ANTIFEDERALIST

During the 1780's the country was divided between the supporters of a new, more highly centralized government, Federalists; and the friends of the existing loose organization of States under the Articles of Confederation, the Antifederalists. Some of these state-rights men were opposed to change because they feared the creation of an American monarchy similar to England. Others opposed change because they did not wish to lose the power and authority they enjoyed in the existing state governments. Such men preferred local and individual liberties to centralization. On the other hand, supporters of the new federal system valued national organization and efficiency more than individual or local liberties.

For each of the following biographies, decide if the individual was a Federalist, or an Antifederalist. After each case study circle what you think the individual is and list several reasons to support your point of view.

THOMAS ABRAHAM CLARK, the son of a prominent Philadelphia lawyer, was born to extreme wealth. He was educated at home by private tutors, and entered local politics at a very early age. He soon rose to the top of his state in politics. He has held a number of important offices in his state. Having travelled extensively in Europe as an ambassador for his state, he both fears and understands the monarchs of Europe. Thomas has corresponded with Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry. He is convinced that a strong national government headed by a king is and has been, the curse of mankind throughout history. Under the Articles of Confederation, his law practice has prospered, but he is concerned over the inflated value of some colonial currency.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice:

JOSIAH BARTLETT was born the son of a farmer. He has little formal schooling, but he has read extensively. At twelve, Josiah left home to serve an apprenticeship as a blacksmith. At the age of eighteen, Josiah set out to make his mark in the state of Virginia. Working as a overseer on a small plantation, he soon saved enough money to begin buying land of his own, and by 1775 he owned a half a million acres of land. Rather than operating large scale and exclusively slave plantations, Josiah invested in smaller farms operated by indentured servants and tenant farmers. He ships a great deal of tobacco, wheat, and cotton to Europe. His economic interests are threatened not only by unstable colonial currency, but by high tariffs and taxes imposed by neighboring states, when he ships crops inside their boundaries. Recently he has been taxed by the state of Maryland to ship crops on the Potomac River which borders that state.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice:

EDWARD HEYWARD is a member of the landed aristocracy of Georgia. His substantial wealth came from the inheritance of large tracts of land on the frontier. Heyward, like most of the people in his state, is extremely provincial in his outlook, having had little contact with foreigners outside his state, other than slave traders. His lack of contact with the outside world and his relative wealth have convinced Edward that things have gone splendidly after independence from Britain. His concerns are the Indian tribes of western Georgia. They are well organized and ably led. Since he has considerable money invested in western land, he would like to see a united effort by the Confederation against the Indians.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice:

PATRICK O'NEIL was born in Hanover County, Virginia. He was largely self-educated. From 1751 until 1760 he was an unsuccessful storekeeper and farmer. Notoriously indifferent to his private fortune and ineffective in his own business, he has made the public his main concern. He is a great orator and by many he is called the "voice of the common man." During the Revolution he served in the House of Burgesses and as governor of Virginia. He was a member of the radical faction which opposed the King before the Revolution, and on a number of occasions in speeches before the House of Burgesses, he swore that he would give up his life before his freedom. He has always thought of himself as a common man. He feels the rights of the people must be protected from all privileged classes, and he has always been a champion of popular rights and local rule.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice:

TOM MCKEAN, like other lads of sixteen, ran away from home in 1776 to join the Continental Army. He was with George Washington's troops at Valley Forge. A slight limp - he lost two toes from frost bite - serves to remind him of that long, hard winter. He was also wounded at Battle of Monmouth Courthouse. His time in the hospital changed his life. An officer in the next bed, in more peaceful times a professor of English, taught Tom to read, as a means of whiling away the time. Tom was an apt pupil. His first primer was the only book the professor had with him: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*. Tom continued his own education when he was mustered out of the army. In the last ten years he has travelled and spent time in every state, making his living as writer for a New York newspaper. He is well aware of the problems facing the American states. He sees the "Spanish-Indian Conspiracy" as a great threat to American growth, and the revolt of Daniel Shays as the beginning of the end for stable government.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice:

CHARLES FRANCIS WHIPPLE was born to wealth in the colony of Massachusetts. During the war years his family sent him to England to be educated in the ministry. After his return from his studies abroad, Charles decided that the economic survival of his state depended upon the protection of property rights, and that political survival depended upon a strong central government to protect his family and his class from the increasing restlessness of common people. Charles is forever preaching that man's instincts can never be trusted, that only strong government offers security. He feels that property rights must be protected and the uneducated masses must be kept in their place. After seeing the results of Shays Rebellion, he feels the common people should have little or no voice in government.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice:

CLYMER FITZSIMMONS is a frontiersman from the Northwest Territory. He lives in a sparsely populated area. His father and mother were killed by the Indians during Pontiac's Rebellion. He has little formal education, but he has no equal in the woods. He was wounded at the Battle of Saratoga, and still carries an English "ball" in his right lung. He was captured later in the war and spent two years as a British prisoner. He is sure that the British government intends to suppress the colonies newly won independence. He believes in a well-armed population and a large, well-organized militia. Clymer has been little affected by the Articles of Confederation and he is basically satisfied with the present economic situation. He is suspicious of those colonial gentlemen of wealth and English custom. He resents the present state government because he is not allowed to vote, since he owns no property.

Federalist or Antifederalist

Reasons for your choice: